



# The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

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● DECEMBER 1989

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"HE SHALL BE GREAT"





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*Opinions expressed by contributors do not commit the C.S.I.*

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*The Magazine of the Church of South India*

**DECEMBER 1989**

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## 25 Years Ago!

What was the usual topic of the conversation of devout Jews of our Lord's time? It was the coming of the messiah. They would wistfully ask, 'When will he come? How would the Messiah come? Would he indeed overthrow the kingdom of the Jews and establish a new kingdom? Would he replace it by holiness, stamp out wickedness and carnality, and replace righteousness to flourish, take away sorrow and give joy? Instead, destroy war and usher in peace?' It was such questions as these which agitated the minds of Hebrews. Like the aged Simon who, 'waited for the consolation of Israel,' and who had been divinely assured that the Messiah 'should not taste death before he had seen the Lord Christ'. And upheld by this promise, he lived an expectant life, until one day, both he and the Blessed Virgin Mary, independently led by the Holy Spirit, made their way to the temple where the Holy Mother, without a word, placed the Divine Babe in the outstretched arms of the aged saint.

—Churchman

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# Peace on Earth...



*The relation between superiors and inferiors is like that between the wind and the grass, wrote Confucius. 'The grass must bend when the wind blows across it'. But as tens of thousands of Eastern Europeans protested against the Communist leaders, the grass stood upright and the wind subsided !*

*The year 1989 may prove more revolutionary than the French Revolution occurred 200 years ago, as Eastern Europeans start to overthrow their oppressive political forces.*

*There were holes discerned in the Iron Curtain. Hungary has ripped open a stretch of the Iron Curtain which was forcibly holding thousands of freedom lovers as captives, in any way. Once an unbroken chain of barbed wire, electronic sensing devices and armed guards, the Iron Curtain is in tatters today. The Berlin Wall of separation crumbled down. President Bush, it is reported, has on his desk a piece of Berlin Wall sent to him as a souvenir by the West German foreign Minister. Hundreds of East Germans and Romanians escape each day through Hungary which began dismantling the physical barriers to Austria. Nearly 1,000,000 ethnic Turks have fled from Bulgaria to Turkey. Hungarians and Poles no longer need their government's permission to leave for the West. As many of us has witnessed on the T.V., people by car, bus, train and bicycle were escaping from the clutches of tyranny—making one of the biggest migrations in recent history. The exodus may grow larger. West Germany intelligence officials*

*estimate that at least 15,00,00 East Germans would like to apply for migration. They expect to accept an additional 3,50,000 ethnic Germans from Poland, Romania and the Soviet Union. Many are descendants of Germans who settled abroad as long as centuries ago.*

*The change was a dramatic and historic. Even before Presidents Bush and Gorbachev had their ship-deck summit last weekend, the end of Cold War passed into the celebratory stage. Mr. Gorbachev's Perestroika is changing the outside world more sensationally than his own country. Spectacular results can be seen in the international aspects of the Soviet leaders plans for restructuring. Mr. Gorbachev is fighting at home to try to convince his people that the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 was not a mistake. In an article in Pravda a couple of weeks ago he spoke of the 'Wider, deeper and more realistic view of socialism,' he promised a society based on, 'an effective economy, on the highest achievements of science, technology and culture and one humanised social structures'. Moscow now frankly admits that the Perestroika Mr. Gorbachev wants to push through means also dismantling of the huge military machine built by Stalin, Krushchev and Brezhnev, in disregard of the needs of socialism. Shedding the vast military capability of the Soviet Union also implies a total restructuring of its foreign relations. Moscow's armed might was the keystone of the East European arch that Stalin fashioned. Soviet troops and tanks suppressed the movements for change in East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. With Perestroika now the watch-*

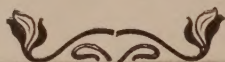


word and the retreat from militarism, it is no longer possible to hold East Europe in the Soviet leash. This explains the startling spectacle of the East European States breaking away one by one and Moscow doing nothing to stop the process at it had done in the past.

Bishop Victor Premasagar, the Moderator, was in Budapest early summer and sensed 'the empire' getting liquidated. He predicted the fall of communism in that part of Europe. Asked to explain reasons other than the political reasons for this fatal fall, Bishop Victor Premasagar said, rather emphatically, that it is the triumph of the Gospel over oppressive forces. How true it is !

One of the titles attributed to Jesus even before he was born, is the Prince of Peace. The words spoken by the angels announcing the birth of Jesus are worth recalling—Peace on Earth and goodwill to all men. One week before the New Year we will be celebrating Christmas. It is important to realise that the event marks God's greatest gift to mankind—the gift of Prince of Peace. Thank God for this gift. The peace of God is the only authentic peace. The peace of God mobilizes, enables one to keep his equilibrium in the face of facts and makes him efficient and capable. Such peace no super power can give and it cannot be taken away either. Jesus himself is our peace. Let us welcome Him into our hearts.

—DASS BABU



## CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA SYNOD MEETINGS

**Dates :** 12th-17th January 1990

**Venue :** All Saints Church Compound  
Dharwar, Karnataka State

**Theme :** Come, Holy Spirit, Renew the  
Whole Creation

*Please pray for the Synod Meetings*



# HE SHALL BE GREAT

## Christmas Message

MOST REVD. DR. P. VICTOR PREMASAGAR *Moderator*

The angel telling Mary, the mother of Jesus, about the birth of Jesus, tells her that he shall be great. As we go through the life of Jesus, it is seen not through power and might, but through humility and obedience to the Father. St. Paul writing to the Philippians tells how Jesus took the form of human person; became a servant and emptied himself (Phil. 2:7). The greatness of Messiah is in complete contradiction to the expectation of the Jewish people. They looked for a Messiah who would destroy the Roman Empire and establish the Kingdom of David. But Jesus chose the path of servant—the suffering servant of Isaiah, who took the sins of his people upon himself and through his suffering made atonement for all people.

The coming of Jesus also transformed the values of greatness. He washed the feet of his disciples and told them that he came to serve but not to be served. He asked his followers to turn the other cheek and go the second mile. He was born in a humble carpenter's family and lived the life of a common man revelling in the joys of ordinary people and had dined even with those who were considered as sinners and outcasts. In his teachings and ministry he gave preference to the least and the last. In his parables he spoke of God coming in judgement

upon those who are unwilling to serve the least of the brethren and commended those who share resources with others, however meagre they might be.

Children had no place in the community and considered to be nuisance to others and of no value to those doing important things in the world. He rebuked his disciples and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me for theirs is the Kingdom'. He had women in the group of disciples at a time when they had no consequence in the community. He gave them dignity and spoke to them at length about the Kingdom. Jesus had compassion on people who were poor and harassed and were like sheep without Shepherd. He told Parables telling people about the Kingdom of God calling them to a life of Justice and Peace and concern for one another.

This is the greatness we look for and values of Kingdom. When we think of coming of Lord Jesus, born in a lowly manger, brings new hope and strength to all people.

As we celebrate this Christmas may the Lord guide this Church to turn to these values of the Gospel and of Kingdom that the whole earth may be filled with peace and goodwill towards all people.





# "Come, Holy Spirit, Renew the whole Creation" Introducing the Theme of the Synod 1990

REV. M. AZARIAH, *General Secretary, CSI Synod.*

As one of the Founding members of the World Council of Churches in 1947, the CSI had sought to share and express its continued solidarity with that World Church Fellowship in a variety of ways. One way seems to have been by adopting the WCC Theme for the CSI Biennial Synod whenever this Seven Yearly World Event came around. It is in keeping with this practice, that the above theme of the VIIth ASSEMBLY of the World Council scheduled to meet in February 1991 in Canberra, Australia, has been chosen for our Twenty Second Session of the Synod that would meet from 12 to 17 of January 1990 in Dharwar in the Karnataka Northern Diocese.

I. The first thing to notice is that the formulation of the theme for a World Christian Conference for the first time is in the form of a prayer. And, very significantly, this prayer embraces not only the whole inhabited earth (Dikoumene) but the whole of creation. In this prayer, what is involved clearly, is the relationship between the humankind and the whole of creation which provides its life-sustaining environment. Simply seen, this prayer implies the human beings approaching the evening of the Twentieth Century (AD) after the birth of Christ are in utter desperation in regard to what is happening to the life-giving resources of this earth and everything in the created Order. Having reached their wits end, as it were, the human beings are being forced to put their tools down, throw up their hands, indeed, raising those hands in surrender and submission to the Creator of the whole creation. But in point of fact, even the thought of such a thing of raising this desperate prayer, would seem to have occurred only to a very, very, tiny speck of the total humanity today. And, who are they and why are they indulging in it, we may ask?

They are found in the Christian Church as believers in the living Saviour Jesus Christ. They are motivated by His presence in their hearts and minds to be concerned with the reality of damage and destruction wrought by human sin upon all of creation, including upon vast sectors of their fellow human beings also created in the same image and likeness of the same Creator. 'The light shines in the darkness' was the way the coming of God in Christ in human flesh (John 1:12-14) was described some 2000 years ago. Thus, it is right and proper for the true followers of Christ to express their deep concern for the decaying creation through this prayer which is at once a cry of repentance (Confession) and a cry for renewal and restoration of the whole creation. And, of course it is also at the same time decrying the confidence and clamour for autonomy on the part of the enlightened modern man with his achievement of Science and Techno-

logy and discovery of Nuclear energy, etc. resulting in amassing of Nuclear weapons that can destroy the whole world several times over. Already in 1983 at the WC VIth Assembly in Vancouver, the gatherings of the World Christian Community identified the impending danger and destruction to the life of the world and its people. Hence they raised the banner of concern for 'JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION' and called for commitment and covenanting by the Christian communities around the world to do everything possible, not merely to warn the present generation of humankind, but to involve them all to turn to the Source of all creation. Thus, this prayer would acknowledge the utter dependence of all humankind on the Creator and inevitable interdependence amongst the members and groups of the total human community. This is how the Christian Church has taken the initiative to stir the conscience of all human beings through this prayer. The late Martin Luther King, Jr. once said in the context of struggle against the State in America, 'The Church is called upon to stir the Conscience of the State'. It is in keeping with such a perception the CSI and the World Church as a whole must dare to take on the role as the 'Conscience' of the whole humankind. Should not our theme prayer be stepped in that direction?

II. The second part of our theme affirms the real presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the whole created order. This Holy Spirit is entirely different and distinct from the Human Spirit or the nature-spirit which has been known to be innate and inherent within all creation. This is quite clear from the Christian Scriptures of the Bible. Thus, in the Creation stories of Genesis; 'the breath of life' (Genesis 2:7) that was blown into the nostrils of Adam by the Creator became the Human Spirit as also the Spirit of the 'Word' of God that commanded the creation into being (Let there be light... etc.) is the Spirit in Nature. But the Holy Spirit is in fact the Spirit of God Himself (Genesis 1:2; Luke 11:13). According to John 7:39, the Holy Spirit had not come into human life or into the created order until after Jesus was Glorified through His Resurrection at Easter. Until then, 'the Spirit had not been given'. This is why the event of the coming of the Holy Spirit for the first time into human history upon the followers of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ on the day of Pentecost is described as a distinct Event (Acts 2). And, Apostle Peter identifies this Holy Spirit as the promised Spirit of God, spoken about by Prophet Joel a few hundred years earlier (Joel 2:28-32). Thus, the Holy Spirit is not only different from the Human Spirit but something given as a gift from God, external to human existence. So, to pray, 'Come,



Holy Spirit' is to affirm and to acknowledge the human need for help from outside.<sup>3</sup> And, also such help can come not based on merit but on Mercy and Grace of the Giver of that help.<sup>3</sup> Thus, this prayer indeed witnesses to the reality of the Gift of the Holy Spirit and the Giver, God Himself. Our theme—prayer, therefore, is proclamation of the Good News, that God in Christ is available with the offer of the Gift of the Holy Spirit to anyone who would receive the same (Matt. 7: 11; Luke 11: 13). It is proclamation of the *presence* of a new reality of the Holy Spirit that had entered human history on the day Jesus of Nazareth was raised from death some 2000 years ago.

Before being taken up into heaven (Ascension) the Risen Lord Jesus told His disciples, 'When the Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with Power and you will be witnesses for Me in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and Samaria and to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1: 8; See also John 20: 19-23). Obviously, Jesus was pointing to the essential characteristic of experiencing the Gift of the Holy Spirit as the *Power for Mission* or witnessing to Him. And, St. Paul would further characterise this Power of the Spirit as the *Power of Love* (Romans 5: 5; Gal. 5: 22). And, this Power of Love, St. Paul would insist, is contrary to the Love of Power that characterises the innate and inherent Spirit in the humankind and in all the natural order of creation. This, he identifies as Powers and Principalities and the ruling Spirits of the Universe (Eph. 2: 2; Col. 2: 20) against which the operation of the Holy Spirit becomes a counter-force that overcomes sin and evil that belong to the old Order of creation. It is in the context of a New reality of the presence and Power of the Holy Spirit then St. Paul sees the Vision of new creation that will replace the Old Creation (Gal. 6: 15; II Cor. 5: 17). In fact, St. Paul affirms that the *New Creation* takes place in the *Holy Spirit* and celebrates that 'the old is gone and the new has come'. Thus, when we pray the prayer, 'Come, Holy Spirit' as believers in Christ, we are proclaiming a message of hope for renewal and restoration in all creation.

But St. John in His Gospel with his deepest sense of perception recognises God Himself in the *person* and in the presence of the Holy Spirit, calling Him as 'Paraclete (Comforter)' (John 14: 16-17). For St. John, the Holy Spirit is more than a gift and more than the presence and more than a power. Holy Spirit is a Person, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, who is at work in the contemporary world of nature and human history (John 16: 4-15).

Thus, the prayer, 'Come, Holy Spirit' proclaims that since the day of the Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead, the extra and the external Divine Force from the Creator God has become available with the coming of the Holy Spirit as a presence and as a Power and as a Person of God Himself for all human kind and the whole of creation.

III. The third part of our theme is the verb, 'RENEW' which implores God the Holy Spirit to accomplish His basic characteristic, purpose and will that He had initiated in the Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth on the First Easter Day. To put it another way, the prayer, 'Come, Holy Spirit'—Renew in fact implores the Third Person of the Triune God to repeat the First Easter in the life of every human person and in all creation too. The famous Ninth Century Latin Hymn, 'Veni Creator Spiritus'—'Come, Holy Spirit' unfortunately omits the

word 'Creator' in the English translation. And, this is how a theological watering down of the role of the Holy Spirit in creation had occurred. So much so, the work of the Holy Spirit became limited in the understanding of the Church such as to only 'Our souls inspire,' etc. But, we may rejoice in the fact that the Ninth Century followers of Christ had readily identified the Holy Spirit as the 'Creator Spirit', who is committed to 'Renew' all creation. For, He is also the Spirit of the Risen Christ, the Lamb eternally slain, who proclaims from the right hand side of God in Heaven saying, 'Behold I make all things new' (Rev. 21: 5). The role of Renewal, of course, includes the tasks of Restoration of the Lost, (cf Luke 15) and the Liberation of the Least (cf. Matt. 25: 31-46) within the human community and in the whole of creation. Hence, St. Paul says programmatically that, 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom' (II Cor. 3: 17)—i.e. freedom from the Law, sin, and death, as freedom for God.

Affirming this same truth, St. John says, 'You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free' (John 8: 32). Thus, 'it is the conviction of both St. Paul and St. John that where human beings take upon themselves to the working of the Spirit in obedience to their Lord, i.e. where freedom is practised as freedom bestowed by the Spirit, the Spirit does actually renew creation'. (Hans Hubner in his article 'The Holy Spirit in Holy Scripture'.)

IV. Our theme Prayer naturally embraces the *whole of creation* in its concern. Here is indeed a great challenge for Christian prayer, a challenge that exposes the shallowness and selfishness, the narrowness and sectarian limitations of our prayers as individuals, as groups, as denominations, and even as united Churches.

In fact, with the inclusion of the fourth phrase, 'THE WHOLE CREATION' this ceases to be a mere Christian prayer. It becomes the prayer that could be prayed by every human being, both Christian and non-Christian. Truly inclusive in its formulation, it is truly an Ecumenical prayer.

Further, by linking the Holy Spirit (which is the Spirit of Christ) and the whole of creation (Cosmos), this prayer, in fact, affirms and confesses the 'Cosmic Christ'. In the words of St. Paul, 'the Cosmic Christ is the One who holds the whole building (of the family of God) together including the Jews and the Gentiles and therefore of all the divided races of human communities (Eph. 2: 21). The Greek Orthodox Churches celebrate this truth about the person and work of Christ by referring to Him as the 'Panta-Crator'—One who holds all things in His hands. St. Paul's letter of Colossians speaks of Cosmic Christ as 'the visible likeness of the Invisible God' and that 'God created the whole universe through Him and for Him' and this Christ 'has in Himself the full nature of God, etc.' (Col. 1: 15-20). And it is the same Cosmic Christ having seated on the right hand side of God, proclaims, 'Behold, I make all things new'. Hence our prayer affirms that in and through this Cosmic Christ the process of Renewal and new creation that began at His Resurrection within human history 2000 years is a continuing possibility and will become a reality. In other words, it proclaims the Good News that the whole creation inevitably inexorably is moving into *New Creation* in Christ. 'Old things are passed away; Behold all things are become new' (II Cor. 5: 17). Thus, this prayer witnesses to the ongoing process of new creation in Christ. The process of New Creation however, moves

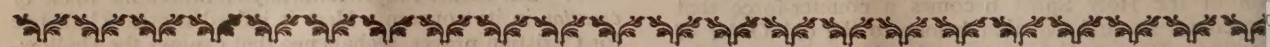


on in terms of recreating everyone into a new human being, a new human community and a new Cosmos, all through, and in Christ. Thus, firstly in Christ there is the offer of a new human nature and a renewal of our inner being. 'If anyone is joined to Christ, he is a new being' (II Cor. 5 : 17), with our hearts, minds and bodies made completely new, thus putting on the *New Self*, (Eph. 4 : 23 ; Rom. 12 : 2 ; Phil. 3 : 21). In saying this we affirm the *new human being* we receive in the Risen Christ.

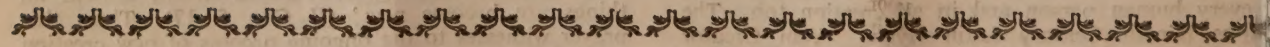
Secondly, based on the fact of the Resurrection, we affirm the coming new human fellowship, a new human community, a new humanity that involves renewal of human relations. St. Paul writes that 'Christ abolished the Jewish Law, with its commandments and rules in order to create out of the two races a single new people in union with Himself, thus making Peace' (Eph. 2 : 15). As a result, 'There are no Gentiles and Jews, no circumcised and uncircumcised, no Barbarians, Savages, slaves or free men but Christ is all and He is in all. You are the people of God' (Col. 3 : 10). Thus, the implication of such a *radical alternative* available in Christ affect human relations in our societies, like in our own Caste-ridden Indian society, can be readily seen and must be obeyed as we dare to pray, 'Come, Holy Spirit—Renew the whole creation'.

Thirdly, when we affirm the bodily character of Jesus Resurrection, we cannot but affirm also that humanity is closely intertwined with the world of matter, of things of nature, i.e. the whole of creation and its transformation and renewal in the same Risen Christ. This is what St. Paul sees when he links the liberation of the created world along with the liberation of human kind. The creation is seen as groaning and travailing in the hope for the day when 'Creation itself will be set free from slavery to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God' (Rom. 8 : 21). The liberation and wholeness of the human involves the liberation and the wholeness of the human relation to the material and the sub-human creation. That is why the Gospel of Christ has a message of renewal for the world of Science and Technology in our time. Hence we hope for and work towards a new Cosmos, a new universe and for the integrity of the whole creation, all because the Risen Christ is the guarantee and the first fruits of new creation.

In conclusion, it remains for me only to call upon and challenge each of my fellow Christians within the fellowship of the CSI to take time to diligently contemplate the consequences and implications before joining your heart and mind to our theme prayer, 'Come, Holy Spirit—Renew the whole creation'.



# We Wish You All A very Happy Christmas!





# The Whole Gospel to the Whole Community

RT. REV. DR. D. POTHIRAJULU, *Deputy Moderator*

In the history of the ecumenical movement, it is a time when we are thinking about the Renewal of the whole creation by the working of the Holy Spirit. Canberra in focus calls us to pray: Come Holy Spirit Renew Thy Whole Creation. The 'Whole Creation' certainly covers a number of aspects and one of which could be 'the Whole Community'. Therefore, our prayer would be; Come Holy Spirit; Renew the Whole Community.

In the economy of God, He has chosen the local Christian Community which have been drawn to His marvellous light, to proclaim His goodness to the whole community moving towards the renewal of the whole creation. Then the kind of interaction between the local Christian Community and the whole local community has to be that of a pinch of Salt savouring the whole meal.

The question I am raising here is whether in our mission priorities we bring 'the whole community' under our pur view. I believe that the preamble in Nazareth Manifesto found in Lk. 4: 18a refers to the whole community. The text reads, 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor'.

A certain amount of holistic approach to the text is required to see how this verse refers to the Work of the Holy Spirit renewing the whole community. A certain amount of unlearning also has to take place in the way we have capitalised upon this verse to undergird 'option for the poor', a priority concern of the church as it is.

I think the time has come that we differentiate between the Biblical theme of 'Preaching the Gospel to the poor' from interpretations which make the Gospel itself poor!! I say this because such interpretations advocate that the poor means the economically poor only. This seems to me a literalists' understanding of the Gospel. There is no doubt that it is a matter of paramount importance that the church takes serious cognizance of the economically poor and the oppressed and establish justice by organizing and empowering them. I have no quarrel with that.

But it is quite a different thing to limit the power of the Gospel to the economically poor only. Where are the other dimensions? The bible preaches the all embracing power of the Gospel—the Holy Spirit renewing the whole community and nothing less than that.

So I contend that the Gospel ought to be preached not only to the economically poor but also to those categories of people who are poor in several other aspects. For example there are those who are poor in trust; poor in relationships; poor in caring; poor in serving; poor in stewardship; poor in compassion; poor in forgiving;

poor in discerning and so on. The Gospel addresses itself to all sorts of poverty and poverty situations. Therefore we do need the help of the Holy Spirit to Renew the Whole Community.

Let us take two bible references to illustrate the concept of 'The Whole Gospel to the Whole Community: I want to draw your attention to the two Biblical narratives on 'Samaritans'. One is the 'Samaritan Woman by the well' (Jn. 4: 4-24) and the other is the 'parable of the Good Samaritan' (Lk. 10: 25-37) Jn. 4: 4 is a beautiful sentence. It reads, 'And He must needs go through Samaria'. It sounds like reading, 'He must go through Gethsemane'. It was a must. It was part of His calling. Jesus goes through Samaria although on a mission.

Now, in the narrative we find Jesus encountering the Samaritan woman. He asks her to give him to drink. She is astonished. She says you being a Jew how can you ask of me for drink. Jesus tells her of her life's condition. It makes her to wonder more about Jesus. She perceives him as a prophet and asks him a religious question: Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and you say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship (Mk. 4: 20).

Here, Jesus sees her desires and aspirations. He sees that she wants to worship God in Samaria and not go to Jerusalem, strangely enough the place of discrimination for her!

Jesus gives an all comprehensive answer and says, 'woman believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, not yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father' (Jn. 4: 21). 'But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; For the Father seeketh such to worship him (Jn. 4: 23). Yes, what matters is the spirit of worship and not the place of worship.

In Jesus' answer you find a recognition of the desires and aspirations of the Samaritan woman. He fulfills it promising a new social and a new religious order.

This is the wholeness of the Gospel. The Gospel reaches the poor—the economically poor and the powerless. But, this is on one hand. It is one dimension; on the other hand you see the example of the parable of the good Samaritan which in fact is an account of the encounter of the Jewish lawyer with Jesus, rather than a 'mercy story'. Properly understood it brings out the other dimension. The parable is well known; the man who travelled from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among the thieves. Now there are three passers by—a priest, a Levite and a Samaritan. The Samaritan saves the wounded



man. Jesus asks the Jewish lawyer—of the three who was the redeemer of the wounded man? The term used is neighbour—who was the neighbour? In effect it was to ask who was the redeemer? In Jewish tradition, the next of kin was the redeemer. He was the Go'el mentioned in the book of Ruth. For a Jew to think of a Samaritan as a Go'el or next of kin was an abomination. The Jews and the Samaritans never got married to each other; they never ate together; they could not even drink water from the same well.

While such is the case, the Jewish lawyer finds no other solution except to agree that the Samaritan was the next of kin—the redeemer. A big transformation takes place in his kind. His attitude changes. He accepts a new set of values. A dynamite goes through his mind, as it were. He replies the Samaritan was the redeemer. He was the *ONE* who showed mercy. Please note, the reference is *the man* symbolising a culture rather than to mercy—a religious value. Jesus replies, go and do thou likewise—do what—accept the new relationship and live that new life—a cultural transformation indeed.

Now the lawyer was a rich man; a learned man; a leader in the society. He was at the Tree Top level rather than at the grass roots level so to say. But his attitude was poor; his set of values were poor. Now my question is very simple; Did the lawyer need the gospel? Was the gospel message powerful enough to reach him? Taking both the Bible narratives into account we find that God affirms the desires and aspirations of the marginalised like the Samaritan woman. This is one dimension and God transforms the attitudes and value systems of the leaders of the society as in the case of the Jewish lawyer. This is the other dimension, of the renewal of the whole community. In other words, *preaching the good news to the poor means reaching both the Samaritan woman as well as the Jewish lawyer*. While Jesus affirms the desires and aspiration of the former, He transforms the values of the latter. Now I would like to bring the latter category into Focus, covering transformation of Values, Attitudes and Structures.

There are numerous categories of people in the society: Merchants, Teachers, Planners, Management Staff, Industrialists; various categories of people in industries like engineers, foremen, labourers; various health workers like Doctors, Community Nurses, Specialists, Agricultural Scientists, farmers, Taxi drivers, Police, Masons, Hotel owners, Cooks and Servants; people in family relationship as father and mother, husband and wife; in-laws and the like. Do they suffer from any kind of poverty? Are they leading a wholesome life? Is their poverty reflected in the society? Can the Gospel liberate them? Should they be brought under the power of the Gospel? How shall we do it? A Christian businessman may not be poor economically but he may be poverty stricken so far as christian ethics is concerned. Does he not need the Gospel that is preached to the 'poor'?

Hence the argument for Laity Formation in the church. Is the Church concerned about Laity Formation and Laity Transformation? The process is Lay training. Laity Formation programmes are carried out in various ways around the world. Special interest groups are invited for Bible study and reflection. Decision-makers, Chief executives, farmers, musicians all categories of people are brought together to evaluate their own work in the light of the Gospel to promote satisfaction and to bring in human values into their work. Lay Training

Centres in U.K., Diaconal Training Centres in scandinavian countries; Evangelical Academies in Europe. Ecumenical Centres in the States; Christian Academies in Asia and Africa take up this task of equipping the people of God for their mission in the society. These are also called 'Nerve Centres' in view of the crucial task they perform.

But, we in India have not taken this aspect of the Church's task seriously. Children pass out of the Sunday School before they hit the teens. Very little care is given during the teenage and when they become adults they fail to see any relationship between faith and life. This is the case by and large.

Christian Education should be a continuous and life long process. You can say Christian education in adulthood is Lay Training. I am not talking about the lay training which trains volunteers to become catechists. The kind of lay training I am talking about is the society related lay training.

The objectives of such Lay Training are three-fold:

1. Enable laity to be a reflecting christian community
2. Enable laity to relate their faith to life.
3. Enable laity to be coworkers with God who has promised a New Heaven and a New Earth.

Such lay training is based on sound foundations:

## I. Biblical Foundation

In I Pet. 2:9 the Bible says, 'you have been called out'. It is a privilege and a responsibility. You are called to be on a mission.

So you can't shirk such responsibility. You are *chosen generation*. You are part of history and you are expected to make history. You are *Royal Priesthood*. The kingdom is yours. You anoint kings. You choose the leaders. You influence decisions. You are a *Holy Nation*—set apart for Christ: to be the mission. You are a *peculiar people*. You will be different as you practice deeper values. You don't yield to the power of darkness as you are called to be children of light. You are called to be LAOS (people of God) and not OXLOS (a meaningless crowd). In this way the Bible provides a solid Biblical foundation of where you belong as the people of God.

Verse 10 is a warning that you will be no people unless you become a people, i.e. people with oneness of mind with a strong accent on Unity. Hence, the *theological* pregnant titles:

- You are a *people called out*.
- You are a *chosen generation*.
- You are a *Royal priesthood*.
- You are a *Holy Nation*.
- You are a *Peculiar people*.

## II. Philosophical Foundation

Laity are called a change agent. God wants a new society, a just society. They become instrumental in changing the society, in developing newer and more just structures. They bring all secular sciences under the rule of God in which Christian Ethics will play a major role. They will be *progressivists* and in that *pragmatic* in their approach.



## Psychological Foundation

Laity ought to grow up as people with dignity. We need to care for their Ego Development. They should be enabled to grow into higher stages of personality development so that they will grow as 'outward looking' people and will have the courage to be.

## Methodology

The art and science of leading adults into an educational experience is radically different from pedagogy of teaching children. Nowadays teaching methods for children are so are changing. How much more we need to apply adult psychology in helping adults to learn. Enabling interaction is one of the most effective ways in Lay training. Numerous models are available for adult study like 'group Investigation Model', for example. This model is used to help people to discover themselves and the neighbourhood.

Schools and Colleges alone cannot deliver the goods; there should be systematic action-reflection-action programmes in the society for adults. Now it is utterly lacking in our countries. I believe that the Lay Training Centres can go a long way in establishing a healthier and more just society.

It will not be out of place to say that lay training proclaims freedom in Christ. What is happening today in the socialist countries in Europe has a direct bearing on the work of the Lay Training Centres (Academies) in Europe, as these centres always lay an accent on the spirit of freedom.

Lay Training Centres are the places for people to discover their inadequacies and being motivated and equipped become rich for the sake of the whole Gospel for the whole community. We have quite a number of programmes for the economically poor which is good; we should also care for the poverty in attitudes and values as we pray to the Holy spirit to come and renew the whole community.

Therefore, my strong recommendation is that we give serious thought to ways of equipping the Laity systematically. VELCOM comes handy. This is a congregation based model. The Lay Training Centres is a model of Residential programmes. Lay training is crucial to see an informed church and an action oriented and an outward looking church, reaching the whole community.

May God the Holy Spirit grant our prayers and Renew the 'whole community' which is part of the whole creation.

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# What We Discovered About Each Other

MISS EILEEN THOMPSON, *Director, CWM Communication, London*

## East Asia

### Pains

- High divorce rate among highly paid and educated women
- Less opportunities for some women due to their own lack of confidence, apathy or indifference
- Poor involvement of career and family women in church activities
- Churches either outspoken regarding political issues and suffering imprisonment or are unable to speak out against social issues
- Prostitution

### Positives

- Women in Society are generally well off economically and academically
- There are equal job opportunities
- Women lawyers take up and are involved in women's issues
- There are increases in women ministers and female theological students
- The churches are following the plans of WCC Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women 1 year/2 year/3 year/5 year. Aim by 1998—50% women Elders/Deacons

### Proposals

- Churches to encourage female theological students and preachers to take charge of a church instead of being allocated to special ministries
- Education of women, training and information sharing needs to be increased in churches

## South Asia

### Pains

- Practice of Sati continues in some groups even though outlawed
- Bride burning due to failure to fully pay dowry is still a daily occurrence
- Dowry persists at great cost to families and is a burden to poor families: families continue to treat women as property
- Illiteracy is still very high among women
- The caste system

### Prostitution

- No participation of women in decision-making office in the church structure
- Women are often paid less salary for the same work done as men
- Women are expected to do three times as much work i.e. in the home, at work, in the church
- Wife battering exists

### Positives

- Awareness of the status of the woman in church and society
- Solidarity is being built among women
- Adult literacy programmes are carried out
- Women's participation in church-oriented programmes is on the increase
- Constitutional provisions are created for more women's participation at the local church level
- The women's fellowships are strongly working to establish a healthy relationship with church and the community
- The women are working for the inheritance law anti-dowry movement and equal punishment for the prostitute and the man involved
- Child care programme and health care programme for mothers is on the increase
- The top committees like the Synod Executive are having women representatives
- Moral and ethical values of 'women's leadership' woman presentation has become a positive acceptance by the woman herself
- The Women's Federations do not advocate open 'liberation' as in the West, but slowly and surely the unlocking process for release of strengths to the right place. Compliance, but not compromise
- On the decision-making bodies this snail movement is there
- Issues and problems of women are now being looked upon as problems of all women and not only Christian women

### Proposal

- The church to work with women to address protest for change against the 'pains'



## Europe

### Pains

- Women with young children often automatically excluded from participation in different groups and committees
- There is always the need to be better than men and achieve a higher standard level for the same jobs and opportunities
- There is often positive or negative discrimination and rarely are women accepted as 'a person'
- There is often the necessity of 'proving' yourself capable instead of being allowed to be yourself
- Officers at levels of moderator and department secretaries are rarely or never women
- Equality often means doing both the tradition role plus a career on top
- Tokenism often is a mask for existing inequality
- Certain denominations still do not recognize the ordination of women

### Positives

- Education and also range of courses more widely available to women
- More nursery provision for working women
- Employment laws (e.g. employment protection act, equal pay for equal work) in favour of women
- More women are taking up managerial positions and headships

### Proposals

- Work towards better balance of women and men at all levels of leadership and church management
- Work to abolish the traditional role patterns both within the church and in society

## Caribbean

### Pains

- Certain denominations are against and do not recognize women's ordination
- Women are not found at levels of executives and decision-making offices e.g. convener of committees, moderators or general secretaries
- Problems with teenage pregnancies

### Positives

- Maternity leave with pay now standard
- Common-law wives are given equal opportunities regarding benefits etc. when their partner dies
- Larger percentage of women are now found in tertiary and university education and in a wider range of disciplines

### Proposal

- In society age of consent for teenagers be raised to 16 years or age (instead of 14 years as at present)

## Pacific

### Pains

- Married women are not allowed ordination
- There are no women deacons
- Theological stance divides church women members
- Wife battering still common in certain countries
- Lack of solidarity between churches of different races

### Positives

- Greater educational opportunity for women has led to greater influence in society as head of departments, politicians, also involvement at church assembly and committee level
- In PNG wife battering is against the law
- Pacific has traditional relationship of respect for women. Seen as sisters to the male (brothers)

### Proposals

- More women deacons and ministers
- More women to be involved in decision-making committees
- More women as co-conveners in Assembly/Committee

## Africa Region

### Pains

- Lack of education among older women reduces their ability to participate fully in society and church
- It also leads to feeling threatened as they maintain tradition standards which are being left behind by the younger educated women. This is also a rural-urban division
- Property rights in marriage when divorced or widowed often means women receive only one-third to also share with the children (Madagascar)
- Women often work hard in the field and home and have little time to develop their potential
- Decisions in some countries are often made by the men without consulting their wives
- Wives have no rights to property including bank accounts when their husband dies in certain countries
- In some countries women are not easily accepted by their in-laws

### Positives

- Heading to equality of opportunity in areas where it was not so before
- Higher education available to girls
- More churches accept ordination of women
- Women are enthusiastic in mission
- Increasing numbers of women serving on committees at all levels
- Better co-operation between men and women with the church (women's projects)
- Women becoming motivated and exploring their potential and making use of their gifts
- Better co-operation of husband and wife in the home

### Proposals

- Encourage the churches to recommend women for CWM leadership development programmes
- Explore ways in which women can become motivated to develop their potential and use their gifts



## SOME STORIES SHARED WITH THE COUNCIL

### From South Asia

#### *Dreamer*

I am swapna—a dreamer—my marriage is fixed to an unemployed youth and my father has to sell all his means to pay the dowry. I have heard that many of my sisters who are earlier married, for want of not being able to pay the promised dowry were strangled to death, burnt or tortured until extreme steps were taken. I dream of a strangulation rope rather than a sweet scented garland.

I hear I am born with a sigh for being a female child. I am given the food after my brothers are fed. Education is not for females. Now many of my sisters are well educated well placed but the dowry is a must. Even the legislation is not fully helping.

If my father fails to pay up the dowry, will I to be strangled or will I be battered to death? If ever I get married and have no children will not my barrenness be treated very badly? And if my husband is dead and I am widowed will I not be burnt in my husband's funeral pyre? Oh! how can I stand this? Is there no way out?

### From Africa

#### *Mother of Detainee*

The anguish, the pain that day when I heard my daughter had been detained, locked up, without hope of a trial—incarcerated to await the state's pleasure. What had she done this child of mine? No more than expressed an opinion relating to education. I knew God was with me, my faith was strong. But what of her? God has never left me to suffer on my own. I prayed for her—she never left my thoughts... so much pain.

The jail is like a tomb, relationships are difficult but she had chosen to support her peers in their struggle to be heard... had sacrificed her freedom. What of her education? This was her final year at school—what of her future? 'O God' I cried, 'support my child, let her know we love her'. Sometimes it is so hard to be a mother—my heart ached so, I longed to fling my arms around her—just to hold her.... hold her.

Thank you God, you empowered my child—took care of her... you made her strong. She organized exercises for those imprisoned with her—she wrote exams, passed her final year—Then came the day! She was released!—Oh what happiness!!! Most of all I praise the Lord for the lesson she taught me, through him She said 'Mummy we must love them'.

### From East Asia

I am a woman, I am a pastor,  
I am alive, I am struggling,  
I am hoping.  
I am created in the image of God  
just like all the other people in the world.  
I am a person with worth and dignity,  
I am a thinking person, a feeling person,  
a doing person.  
I am the small I AM that stands before  
the big I AM.

I am a worker who is constantly challenged and faced with the needs of the church and society in my country and in the global community. I am angered by the structures and powers that create all forms of oppression, exploitation and degradation. I am a witness of the moans, tears, banners and clenched fists of my people. I can hear their liberating songs, their hopeful prayers and decisive march towards justice and freedom.

I believe that all of us, women and men, young and old, Christians and others are called upon to do responsible action, to be concerned, to be involved... now I am hoping... I am struggling... I am alive... I am a pastor... I am a woman.

Based on a poem by Elizabeth Tapscott

## A DECLARATION

Their experience together led the CWM Women Consultation to the decision to produce the following Declaration:

1. CWM believes that, as human beings created in the image of God, women and men are empowered by God to be instrument of God's mission in affirming the dignity and worth of all people.
2. CWM acknowledges that many women experience pain because the dignity and worth given to them by God and the opportunities to fulfil the call to be part of God's mission are denied to them. Traditions and structures, prejudice and language and the attitudes of both men and women.
3. CWM affirms that it cannot exercise partnership fully without the contribution of women, and therefore asks member churches to respond positively to the *Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women* by taking decisive action, such as:
  - (a) facilitating theological education for women
  - (b) accepting the ordination of women and encouraging women to take positions of responsibility in church and society;
  - (c) increasing the proportion of women in decision-making bodies at all levels of church life working towards a goal of 50% by the end of the *Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women* (1998);
  - (d) ensuring that 50% of the participants in leadership courses are women;
  - (e) supporting the provision of equal educational opportunities for women in the wider society;
  - (f) calling for equal justice for women under the law;
  - (g) making sure that decisions about development are made in consultation with women.

The Council welcomes and endorses the above Declaration.



# Quality of Life for the Mentally Retarded

Ms. VATSALA SEBASTIAN, *Bangalore*

'Look at our abilities and not at our disabilities'

'Labels are for bootless, not for people'

These are few of the catchy 'cliches' which greeted us at the exhibition hall of the 9th Asian Conference on mental retardation, held in Bangkok.

The venue of the conference was the Central Plaza Hotel.

The dates were from November 5th to 10th, 1989.

The theme "Quality of life for the mentally retarded."

Our grateful thanks to the Director of CSI-CCC Capt. Chakravarthy Bedford for very kindly recommending our names to K.N.H., Dieburg, Germany. Between the local and the foreign offices, they willingly sponsored us to attend the conference and we are thankful to them for the golden opportunity provided. Four of us who attended the conference are working in institutions for the intellectually disabled, these are also known as Schools or special education for the mentally retarded. They come under the banner of the Church of South India, Council for Child Care (CSI-CCC).

It was a delightful experience to find the people of Thailand very warm and courteous, extremely gentle mannered, gracious and hospitable. The venue of the conference, the Central Plaza Hotel was an exquisite place. Arrangements were very carefully and excellently planned, this resulted in the smooth and efficient run of the conference.

The participants included 450 delegates from Asia and also from U.K., U.S.A., Latin America and Europe.

250 mentally handicapped children were present, along with their guardians. There were separate activities simultaneously planned for them at the venue of the conference.

It was in the year 1973 that the Asian Federation for the Mentally Retarded (AFMR) was established.

Rev. Fr. Arthur Malin, an American Roman Catholic priest had come to Asia in order to assist the mentally retarded in the Asian region. He aimed at promoting a better quality of life for the mentally retarded with rights to live as normal people. His study and research revealed an astounding 75 million mentally retarded people in the Asian continent. This became a major concern, so he arranged the first Asian conference on mental retardation in Manila, Philippines. This was where the Asian Federation for Mentally Retarded was established (AFMR).

The AFMR member countries have since hosted such conferences once in two years by turns. India hosted the 1977 conference.

Following are the objectives of the conference :

1. To promote co-operation between member countries in the Asian region in order to develop a quality of life for the mentally retarded in Asia.
2. To increase knowledge of the personnel of member countries of the AFMR so that they will have sufficient knowledge and understanding to develop more efficiently the activities for the mentally retarded of each country.
3. To encourage co-operation and joint ventures among member organisations and their personnel in order to exchange knowledge and experience.
4. To assist those who work in connection with the mentally retarded by research for the prevention of mental retardation.

Following are the results of the conference :

1. The mentally retarded in the Asian region will have a better quality of life, with rights and opportunities to live in society as normal people.
2. That governments might be encouraged to provide more services for better education and more vocational training for the mentally retarded.
3. Personnel who work in connection with the mentally retarded as well as parents and the public will be able to learn about procedures and new technologies in prevention and to inform the disability of the mentally retarded, especially early intervention of the new born of the MR enable them develop and adjust themselves to be easily accepted in society when they grow up.
4. For the public to become aware of and have an understanding about mental retardation so that they will learn how to protect themselves in order to prevent mental retardation in the pregnancy stage. The population of the mentally retarded will decline, thus reducing the burden to society and the national economy.

I have cited the objectives and the expected results of AFMR with the hope to create an awareness among our churches and its institutions.

Those involved in this work are, many voluntary organisations, parent's associations of the mentally retarded children, Schools, homes and hostels of CSI-CCC. The C.C.F., have expressed their willingness to support this work. A few government organisations have Schools for special education. All these cater to the needs of the mildly, moderately, severely and profoundly retarded.



Looking at the magnitude of the existing problem, what is being done is hardly a micron. This could be attributed to the lack of knowledge of the parents who could have prevented mental retardation in some cases (i.e. only if it had not been genetic), rather than go through a life time of suffering with the child. If timely ante-natal, peri-natal and post-natal care are given to the mothers, there is every chance of a healthy child being born. Simple nutritious food provided during infancy stages i.e. 0-3 years could prevent malnutrition and also mental retardation due to malnutrition.

We at 'Aparna', CSI-CCC, School for special education of the Karnataka Central Diocese have planned an outreach programme. This is to help mentally retarded children in Kolar, K.G.F., and Tumkur. Teachers, volunteers and crèche workers will undergo a training on understanding and managing mentally retarded children, accordingly they will be requested to assist at the crèches at our extension centres. This outreach work is due to the inspiration given to us by our Chairman/Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. C. D. Jathanna.

It was heartening to note that the sponsored walk organised by the CSI-CCC proved a great success. Both children and elders who participated were delighted to make a worthy contribution towards their disabled brethren. This walk created a lot of public awareness.

Caring for these special children is not difficult as they are void of all malice and ill-will. They thrive on attention and care recognising this as being loved. They could be trained to be self-reliant, which would make them more acceptable in the society.

It would be most encouraging if church and para church organisations could take the initiative in launching out special programmes like day-care centres and vocational training. Also staff could be specially trained to understand the traits of children in this mental condition so as to serve them well.

With a caring heart we can reach out to them. What better offering can we give to our King this Christmas season than to reach out in a personal way and touch the life of one these special children.

'There is a beauty when its Christmas  
All the world is different then  
There is no place for petty hatred  
In the hearts and minds of men  
That is why my heart is happy  
and my mind can hold a dream  
For I keep a part of Christmas  
With its peace and joy supreme.'





# Season of Celebrating Christ

REV. D. S. JEEVAN BABU, *Bangalore*

It's again a season of seasons  
punctuated by celebrations

Every article in the market bears its name  
Every person in society bears its charm

Price tags look dearer and dearer  
Sentiments permeate hearts and minds

Barriers temporarily truncate trivialities  
Formalities penetrate all spheres

Kids cornered in Christmas plays  
Elders engrossed in enormous arrangements

Bells of Cathedrals find no rest  
Portals of churches swelled with crowds

Priests appear like busy bees  
Budgets trespass boundaries

Poor Jesus reduced to plastic dolls  
Poor people yield to pawn brokers

To commemorate Jesus in the Manger  
'Extravagance' becomes a by-word

Christmas carols used to proclaim good news  
But have come to stay as sheer business

Churches and houses are given face lifts  
The real faces of people are camouflaged

All because it's a season of Christmas  
The birthday of Jesus Christ

He was born in a lowly place  
He began an epoch of human dignity  
And became an epitome of divine love

We wish to say 'Happy Birthday' to Jesus  
Where is Jesus Today?  
Can we find Him

He is given a new identity  
A Dalit in India  
A Minjung in Korea  
A Black in Africa

Being agonised in South Africa  
Being nailed to the Cross across the world  
Being victimized everywhere in every person

What would make Jesus  
Celebrate His birthday happily?

Our pomp, dress, our decorations.  
Our parties, Santa Claus, cribs and carols?

No — No — No —

It's our decision to be what Jesus is

Our commitment to the cause of Christ  
Our sincerity in our work  
Our humility in our attitudes  
Our protest against injustices  
Our concern for the poor  
Our availability for the people  
Our practice of Christian values  
Our upliftment of human integrity  
Our acceptance of each other.

It's a season to reflect on the life of Christ  
It's a season to put an axe on gaiety and extravagance  
It's a season to put ourselves in the shoes of Jesus

Christmas is a time to allow ourselves  
to be renewed by Christ  
Let the Joy of Christ be reflected  
in our celebrations of His birthday.





# Lord, Lord, How do you know that?

Ms. SUGUNA DEVASUNDARAM\*

My task demands  
unending journeys,  
Carrying a Cart-load of files, papers, books  
In addition to products  
produced by slum women  
As their families live  
on my sales.  
Oh ! how often I stand alone  
puzzled, pushed down  
in the solicitude of helplessness.

I stand at home with packed baggage  
all round me and wonder  
Who will help me to catch  
a three wheeler—  
Of course there is none—  
I allow the luggage to lie there  
and go out in search—  
As I leave and reach the gate  
A sound is heard  
The tiny carrier is seen  
as if it comes from my own garage  
and halts just in front of me,  
I mutter within me in great satisfaction  
How do you know that Lord ?

In a crowded bus station,  
railway junction  
The same fear comes,  
There is additional fear too—  
The charges of the porter ! !  
A woman in despair,  
That is the fortune he thinks.  
to raise his demands in double fold—  
His words are forcible and rude—  
One dare not answer him—

Yes, as I stand — — — —  
At that minute a pleasant helper arrives for my rescue  
Again I ask, How do you know that Lord ?

I am told of thousand incidents,  
Where ordinary human beings,  
Meet you in most unexpected circumstances  
and enclose numerous subserviences  
In loneliness you are the  
companion,  
In helplessness you are the  
refuge,  
In sorrow you are the reliever,  
In pain and death you are the  
comforter—  
How is it ? How is it ?

Yes, you emptied yourself,  
to be born on this earth,  
You humbled yourself to the extent  
of living and moving with the  
suppressed, depressed and oppressed.  
But never neglected the rich and the elite.  
Your encounter with all, in all juncture,  
has raised you as the father in heaven  
and on the earth  
And the giver of joy and peace  
for ever and ever.

\*Ms. Suguna Devasundaram is the Travelling and Executive  
Secretary of C.S.I. Women's Fellowship.

(Contd. from p. 18)

It is a matter of gratifying comfort that the early Church in Andhra Pradesh—and even the entire South, was robust in its faith, courageous in its crusade of mass movement, an indigenous 'sons of the Soil' type of home-made faith in spite of the 'paternalism of the Western missionary'.

In our ultra-Modern times, there have been and still are such irresistible pressures on our life in all directions that the original Indian simplicity is extinct. What a sad contrast to the 'very much at-home' Carol in a Cycle rickshaw ! She lived in half a house with one room and a small verandah, denying to herself the apparent luxury of the sprawling old-fashioned bungalow, served by an army of servants, eating strange food, and wearing still stranger clothes !

It is also a matter of no small concern that today there seems to be a tremendous come-back to certain activities

in the name of Christ and His Church, stemming from money and material benefits, associated with missionary activity in our country. This is unfortunately backed by an ignorant if not clever patronage by the wealthy foreign Church and dabbling in foreign money.

It is very true that, we in the Indian Church do a good deal to the early foreign missionaries. We are only indigenous Church now, but independent. Through the ages to come, the Indian Church will rise up in gratitude to attest to the self-denying labours of the missionary body, but we ask in the words of our first Indian Bishop, Azariah of Dornakal.

'YOU HAVE GIVEN US YOUR GOODS TO FEED THE POOR AND YOUR BODIES TO BE BURNED BUT WE ASK ALSO FOR LOVE, GIVE US FRIENDS LIKE SISTER CAROL.'



# South Asia Theological Research Institute [Sathri]

DR. K. C. ABRAHAM

South Asia Theological Research Institute (SATHRI) is a new Centre for doctoral studies and non-formal research in theology under the Serampore University, located in the campus of the United Theological College, Bangalore, it is run in collaboration with UTC. SATHRI was formally inaugurated at a meeting held at UTC on August 17, 1989, the birthday of William Carey, in the presence of a large group of theological educators, leaders of the Church, members of the Senate and the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College and students.

The President of the Senate addressing the gathering said 'A dream has come true. A new chapter has begun in the history of Theological Education in India'.

The doctoral programme of the Serampore College has been going on for the past ten years in five different centres. SATHRI is an attempt to provide a strong well-equipped research centre. It was agreed that it would be more realistic to develop a better-equipped centre rather than to start a new Institute. With this view in mind, SATHRI is a programme of BTESSC in collaboration with the UTC.

SATHRI is also an endeavour to strike a new path in evolving a contextually relevant research in theology. A document that became the basis of the discussions of SATHRI states:

'The Church should also be enabled to see God redemptively present in all contexts of oppression and injustice. They should learn to reflect upon the contextual Indian realities in the light of the Gospel. Often this leads to a discernment that culture, religion and socio-economic structures jointly conspire to exploit and dehumanise people. Such an awareness may demand a reassessment of the Christian tradition. The Christians should read and interpret the Bible and tradition in such a way that they may learn to question and, if necessary, dissent from any interpretation which appears to legitimise oppression. The vision of a just and whole human society purposed by God in Christ should provide a basic principle in biblical hermeneutics.'

We have now started with four students and all are assigned to professors locally available with consultants drawn from theological colleges in other parts of the country. An ad hoc committee with the principal of the UTC as the chairperson guides the programme of the doctoral studies. Occasions are provided for the students to have interaction with the supervisors and other resource persons. As the years go by, we will be admitting more students and at a given year the total strength of doctoral students will be around sixteen to twenty. At the moment most of the facilities and infrastructure are provided by UTC and we are grateful to this. But as we expand our programmes there is need for additional facilities. Most of the doctoral students are sponsored by theological colleges in India who are committed to upgrading their

institutions for providing quality education and training in ministry. The scholarships are provided by the Solidarity fund that was raised by the help of Programme for Theological Education of WCC from our partners and friends overseas. We are, however, in need of further funding for scholarship which we admit more students.

The programme for non-degree research has not yet started. And our hope is that SATHRI will provide an opportunity for issue-oriented, creative research that affect the life and mission of the Church.

Dr. K. C. Abraham, Professor of Theology and Ethics of UTC is appointed as the first director of SATHRI and he assumed office from July 17. He is also the director of the Board of Theological Education of BTESSC.

Mention must be made about the help and support of numerous friends and well wishers in the initial stage of this project. The Rt. Rev. C. D. Jathanna, the Bishop and the Most Rev. Victor Premasagar, the moderators of C.S.I. are two Church leaders who have actively supported this scheme from the beginning. Without the enthusiastic support and persuasion of Dr. San Amritam, the PTE-WCC director, the scheme would not have taken off. Our overseas partners in the Churches and mission bodies in England, Europe and USA have stood by us in our decision and we continue to be grateful to them. The Senate officers, the President Dr. Jacob Verghese, the Registrar Mr. S. Satyaranjan and the Treasurer Dr. C. L. Furtado have spent several hours and days for the effective implementation of the programme. Our thanks are due to Dr. E. C. John, the Principal and the staff of UTC for making available the facilities of the college, its library and housings for SATHRI.

Perhaps it is fitting to conclude this brief report with a prayer we used at the inaugural meeting.

Almighty God, the author of wisdom and hope, we thank you for the gift of this new centre of theological learning, SATHRI, which we dedicate in your name. We thank you for the vision that inspired many for establishing theological colleges and training centres for the service of your Church and the Kingdom in this land. We now thank you for the way in which you have guided us in joining together in this programme of higher education. For the contribution of the churches all over the world, and for the unity of the church, expressed through this venture, we praise you. We pray that this may be a lively centre for sound learning, new discovery, and the pursuit of wisdom, and grant that all those who teach and those who learn and those who administer, may find you the true source of all truth. We ask this blessing through Jesus Christ whom you have sent, who lives and reigns with you, recreating us and this world in your likeness and the Holy Spirit who leads us into all truth—alone God for ever and ever. Amen.



# Sister Carol Graham

## The Beloved 'AMMA'

REV. P. DHARMAGNANI, Madras

The Women's Fellowship of the CSI Order of Sisters have made a significant contribution to the Cause of Women by publishing this book 'SISTER CAROL GRAHAM THE BELOVED AMMA' during this Ecumenical Decade. Mrs. Daisy Premasagar the president of the Women's Fellowship of the CSI released this publication at St. Mark's Cathedral, Bangalore, on the twenty-sixth Sunday after the pentecost (12th November).

The Women's Fellowship have for the first time launched upon the publication programme. It is a good augury that their inaugural issue is the one on the founder of the Women's Fellowship and of Vishranthi Nilayam. It was also very appropriate that the Memorial and Thanksgiving service was preceded and followed by a well-attended and well-planned Leadership training programme for women at Vishranthi Nilayam with eminent thinkers, theologians and pastoral Aid Department participating as resource persons.

In spite of inclement weather and incessant rain the Memorial Service in the Cathedral was well-attended. It was a silent solemn procession—all in white—of the sisters and members of the Women Fellowship of the CSI, led by the Cathedral Choir; The President, Vice-president and the General Secretary of the Woman's Fellowship along with two retired Bishops and the former Moderator, Bishop Anandarao Samuel at the last line of this flowing white procession presented an inspiring spectacle.

The Rev. Benjamin Dorairaj, Presbyter, of the Cathedral, conducted the service: The senior Sisters led the intercessions: Bishop Dr. Anandarao Samuel, paying tribute to the memory of Sister Carol Graham recalled his association with her while he was a student of the U.T.C. at Bangalore. He cited instances of her valuable counsel, courage and confidence. Sister Elizabeth Paul and Miss Suguna Devasundaram General Secretary remembered Carol's care and concern for Christian Women. Rev. P. Dharmagnani introduced the publication to the congregation.

The highlight of the celebrations was the thought-provoking, devotional discourse by the Most Rev. Dr. Victor Premasagar at the lovely little chapel of the Sisters at the Vishranthi Nilayam, followed by an unveiling of the 'Tablet' in memory of Sister Carol Graham in the garden adjacent the Chapel.

Tracing the early days of Sister Carol at Raghavapuram, a Village in Krishna District, A.P. locked between two streams known for fierce floods—Bishop Premasagar highlighted her simple living and high mettle—her contentment, courage and commitment. The Moderator aptly

described her glorious work as 'Treasure in Earthen Vessel'.

Sister Carol is a good writer with a directness and simplicity in expression and a crystal clarity of thought. In a way, her books give us a prismatic picture of the British India from the Thirties to early Sixties. (She came to India in 1927 as missionary and returned to England in 1963.) Lord Mountbatten in a private letter passes on this message after reading Sr. Carol Graham's book 'Between Two Worlds'.

'Thank you for your letter enclosing a copy of the fascinating booklet written by Carol Graham. I particularly enjoyed her chapter on 'The New India'. I do recall meeting her in Bangalore and remember the fine reputation she had as the First General Secretary of the Women's Fellowship of the Church of South India.'

Among Sister Carol Graham books, CLS has the distinction of publishing 6 Books:

1. God in the Home.
2. The Holy Spirit in the Home.
3. The Rising of the Sun.
4. The Meaning and Practice of Prayer
5. By Bread Alone?
6. Between Two Worlds.

It would be a real memorial to the memory of the great soul, if all her writings are published in a single volume, it will not be expensive. In fact these books of shorter duration sell well, and Carol Graham's books are quite compact.

Dornakal in Telengana Area was Sister Carol's first home. 'FOR ME THE ANSWER WAS DORNAKAL THE MECCA OF ALL MY HOPES'; she writes in her book 'Between Two Worlds'.

We usually give credit to human wisdom, when we should gratefully compliment the divine guidance of God. It is a part of His purpose for the Church in Andhra Pradesh, later for that great and historic Union of the Church of South India, that the wise Lord seems to have detected the visionary in Carol—who had already worked her way through the rigours of the First World War and dumped her in Dornakal to adventure with her pioneering spirit in the Indian Church on Indian Soil.

(Contd. on p. 16)



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